

Motion Sickness

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Motion Sickness

by [undermycoat](#)

Summary

No. No, no, no, *no*. George pushes himself away from the desk, rising up out of his chair to go to the other side of his room. No. There's no way. No way at all.

Except there is. Except *he* is.

George collapses onto his bed with a groan. He's in love with Dream.

Great.

Chapter 1

It's 10am and Dream is streaming. George sighs, resting his chin on his palm as he opens the stream and joins TeamSpeak. He won't comment on how it's 5am for Dream, won't comment on any of his friends' sleeping schedules. Though he's joined, Dream is still talking to those that have shown up, telling them what he wants to do. Meanwhile, George scrolls lazily through some of the chat, most of the messages just being *his* and *hellos*.

"George?"

George drags his foot across the floor, swiveling his chair. "Yeah?"

"Are you—never mind."

George laughs. "I'll just be here. Didn't realize you need me so much."

"You're such an idiot." Dream's laughing too, though, and George smiles as he grips the edge of his desk, pulling himself closer to it. Eventually, the stream gets properly going, but even then, George remains mostly silent, content to watch the stream, replying to the occasional donation that comes through asking for him to say "hello" and the like.

With Dream so focused on the game, the stream is calmer than usual, some of the donations not even being read—though Dream apologizes, saying he'll get to them later—and nothing but the sound of keys on a keyboard, the click of a mouse. Every once in awhile, Dream'll narrate what he's doing or react to something that happened within the game, leaving not much room for conversation unless George has something to talk about, which he doesn't, so George mostly leans back and listens to his friend.

Sometime between hour one and two George must've drifted off because when he wakes, the stream has ended, though he still hears Dream narrating.

George sits there another couple of seconds, letting the gentle timbre of Dream's voice settle over him like a warm blanket on a cold day. His eyes begin to flutter shut again as Dream talks about finding a quicker trade strategy. Everything feels light, soft and slow as Dream moves on to talking about a seed he once got, the biomes in it all types of messed up. When Dream starts to laugh, butter and honey, George can't help but think he could listen to the other forever.

And then George is jerking upright in his chair, eyes going wide at his thought.

"George?" Dream's voice cuts through George's panic.

George takes a breath, hands scrambling across his desk to grab at his mouse and splay across his keyboard. Dream calls his name again and George spits out some lame excuse, exiting the call. When George looks at the screen, he's grateful to see the stream really had ended an hour ago, none of his freak out having ended up forever immortalized on the Internet.

And then his relief is cut in two when he remembers why he was panicking.

No. No, no, no, *no*. George pushes himself away from the desk, rising up out of his chair to go to the other side of his room. No. There's no way. No way at all.

Except there is. Except *he* is.

George collapses onto his bed with a groan. He's in love with Dream.

Great.

He spends most of the day rolled up in a cocoon on his bed, blanket tucked under his chin while he stares blankly at the wall. Any thoughts he has of Dream are purely unintentional and entirely unwanted. It's the reason he isn't playing Minecraft or coding to take his mind off things. Because those remind him of Dream. In fact..., George's eyes flit over to his set-up, just about everything in the corner there reminds him of Dream.

George gives another groan, rolling over to bury his face in his pillow.

He doesn't even know when it happened. He just knows when he realized. Not that he wanted to realize. He wishes he hadn't. He's never even thought about his friend like that before! Or... perhaps he has once. Or twice. But *only* because it's always brought up. By fans, by Bad and Sap, by Dream himself. So he can't be blamed for that. But to actually fall for Dream?

George wonders if his brain would let him suffocate himself.

It's all just so ridiculous. Especially when he thinks about how he and Dream were planning to record a video later today. Ugh. Recording a video. George rolls onto his back, staring up at his ceiling. Out of the two of them, Dream is the one who throws in the fanservice. And he'll do it this video, too, he knows.

George wonders if he could ask for another day or two before they record. Say he's got a new idea that he wants to work out before they record, that way... that way... he'll figure out his excuse when he talks to Dream.

If he talks to Dream. Because he'll have to do that again.

George's stomach rumbles. Ugh. When it gives another growl, George heaves a sigh, unrolling himself out of his blankets and rising, wondering what snacks he has in the kitchen. It's dumb, but he really is planning to spend the whole day in bed. This situation just calls for that.

The thing is, George gives another sigh as he cuts up some fruit and grabs a bag of pretzels, that he's known he's gay. He's known that for years. It's just that... it's Dream. His friend. Best friend. And also... they're sort of co-workers. Technically, okay, *technically*, they aren't. Their agreement isn't particularly professional. They work together. But they don't *work* together. Sort of. So that's whatever. But still. Their careers do benefit from their friendship.

And here's George's heart holding a bat, ready to wreck it all.

George grumbles as he munches aggressively on a pretzel stick. It's all so stupid.

He's holding an apple slice to the light, watching the way it glistens, when a memory resurfaces in his mind. It's of a younger Dream and a younger George (though, he supposes, not *that* much younger, not for him). He had just come out to the other, holding his breath, wondering what he'll say.

"Cool," is what he had said. George's knuckles had turned white from how tightly he had been gripping the wires of his headset.

"Cool."

And then—

"Why'd you tell me?"

George had paused, blinking at his computer screen, not that there was really anything to look at. He hadn't known how to respond, not really. And then. "I just wanted you to know. You're my friend. You deserve to know. It feels important."

Dream had hummed, the single note ringing through George's ears. "Alright," he said. "If it's important. Thanks." And then there was a pause, one that George knew he wasn't supposed to fill.

But then the pause kept going. And George started to wonder if maybe he was supposed to fill it. "Dre—"

"I thi—"

"What?" George's fingers had gotten tangled in the cord. He tried to get them out as Dream replied.

"Nothing. Thanks for telling me."

And then they had moved on.

George takes a bite out of his apple slice. It was both the most awkward and least awkward coming out experience he's had to date. Dream's easy acceptance, then the pause, the unspoken words. George can't help but wonder what Dream had wanted to say. He finishes off his apple slice. Despite the peculiarity of the conversation, he's never thought much about it since. George wonders why he's thought of it now. A way of predicting how Dream'll react when George tells him?

No. George sits up, the bag of pretzels shifting, falling onto the bed next to him. No. He's not going to tell him.

They tell each other a lot. George looks to his desk, thinks about the impending call he's to have with the other. But not this. He'll never tell him this.

Chapter 2

Clay frowns at the screen. George can have some pretty weird moods, but this one had been unlike any Clay had ever experienced before. It was so abrupt too.

He'd think it's because George had fallen asleep mid-stream or perhaps because he fell asleep while still on TeamSpeak, but it's not the first time he's done that. Really, they've *both* fallen asleep while the other was still on the line.

So what made this any different?

Clay exhales, leaning back in his chair, eyes catching on the time. 8:38am. Clay deliberates for a second before stretching and deciding to eat something.

Despite the multiple reassurances he gave the stream, he actually hadn't slept the night before—not well, at least. He'd kept tossing and turning, thinking about the next day. It's a recording day, him and George attempting to complete a new challenge, one he'd been excited to try for awhile. And normally he *can* sleep the night before they record, but something in him was just buzzing and he found himself wide awake then stumbling out of bed to start a stream under the guise of speedrunning practice.

George had joined, because of course (really, he knew it was late morning when he had started, mind on autopilot, converting the clock to British time—10am), and Clay had wondered if his presence would change the objective of the stream, the mood of it, but no, he stayed quiet, only occasionally laughing, breathy and light in Clay's ear, and he'd speak only when specifically asked to. Eventually, his commentary faded out entirely, and Clay was left to assume he had drifted off, especially after a donation came through asking for him to tell George that the "Georgiepooypoo GC" loves him, Clay obeying only to get no response. After calling his name a couple times, George still hadn't replied, though it said he's still on TS. Clay had given a small laugh at that before continuing on with the stream, ignoring the chat that had begun to fill with *OMGs* and *HE'S ASLEEPS*.

It was about an hour after the stream ended that a crackle burst through his headphones, though no noise came after that. Clay kept talking, recalling a seed that had butchered biomes and glitches galore, laughing at the memory of a dumb move he made. Only a couple seconds after that had there been movement from the other end and then...

"George?" Clay spoke softer than usual, in case the other wasn't actually awake.

The clattering of a mouse, a hand swiping across a keyboard.

"George?" It came out louder, more deliberate. Clay frowned as his little character wandered across a mesa, George still silent before—

"I have to go. I—my—breakfast." And then the tone. And then silence. Complete silence. George had left. Clay's character took damage from a fall. Clay stares blankly at the screen then frowns.

Really. He had never encountered a George like that one before.

It's after hours, many hours, later that he gets a message from George, asking if they're still recording. Clay replies with an affirmative then goes to grab something to eat. He had skipped dinner, completely unintentional, the same way him sleeping through the day had been

unintentional. Though he liked to consider himself a go-getter, and he *is* a go-getter, he had decided to let George's weird behavior go and not chase after it, instead falling into his bed and falling asleep.

The next time he woke up, it was lunch, so he ate, and then the next time he woke up, it was to George's message.

Now, he's counting down the time to 9pm, ready to try the challenge.

When it's time, he gets online to find George already there.

"Ready?" he asks the other.

"Yeah." Alright. George sounds normal enough.

Clay sets everything up. "Okay," he says, "run the command."

It goes smoothly, George screams, Clay laughs, George moves deliberately, Clay moves in any way that'll make George nervous. It's funny and normal and—

"You're a genius! I could kiss you right now," Clay grins as he turns his player to look at George's. "George, kiss me!"

George doesn't reply.

"George," Clay bites back another round of laughter. "Come on. *George*."

Still nothing.

"What?" Clay straightens up in his chair. "Okay. I can cut that."

"It's fine."

Clay can barely hear him. "What?"

"Don't worry. I was—I was just out of it. I guess."

"George," Clay shifts again in his chair, "it's fine. I took it too far, don't worry."

"No, I just—," George makes a frustrated noise and Clay takes his fingers away from the keyboard for a second, "it's nothing. It's my fault. Didn't sleep well last night."

Externally, Clay accepts it, moving on and beginning to mine using George's improved method, but internally, he marks it down, and he's grateful for it later when he makes another comment—"aw, you look so cute, holding the flower"—and George once again doesn't reply. He ends up taking note of every instance George ignores his fanservice, and it ends up being every time. When he's done, he hears the stutter in George's voice, and he finds himself having to repeat to himself not to ask, to at least wait until they aren't being recorded.

The minute he finishes the recording, he's onto George. "What is it?"

"What's what?"

"You're not acting yourself. What happened?"

He hears George take a breath. "I'm just tired. It's 2am. I want to sleep."

"You could've asked to film tomorrow," Clay says.

A pause. "Yeah."

"What's wrong?"

George doesn't respond. Clay makes a face, though the other can't see.

"Just send me what you've got," Clay finally says, knowing George can be just as stubborn as him, if not more, when he puts his mind to it. "I'll have it up quick."

"Okay." And then the call ends and Clay is left to wonder what the hell is going on.

Aside from the clips, George neither sends nor says anything else, and Clay spends a good while going between calling him and leaving him be before he's giving up, George having not been online for a good amount of time, and going to get a snack.

Though his body protests, having slept the whole day, Clay still gets into bed, rolling over and squeezing his eyes shut.

Not once does George call, nor does he send a message; he doesn't post anything to Twitter either. Clay rolls onto his other side. It'll be fine. Whatever's bothering George won't last. And if it does, well, he'll tell Clay eventually.

Right?

Chapter 3

George had fucked up. He thinks this over and over as he compiles clips to send Dream, wincing when he replays moments where Dream tries to include fanservice and George just butchers it completely.

"I could kiss you right now!" Dream's voice echoes through his headphones. George squeezes his eyes shut as he hears his response—or lack thereof—then groans, burying his face in his hands.

"Stupid," he mutters to himself.

An hour later he finds himself done and sends the clips to Dream, leaning back in his seat before spinning around and stumbling to bed. Technically, his excuse to Dream had been correct. Exhaustion tugs at his bones and when he settles into bed, his chest feels heavy. But that exhaustion isn't from work, isn't from the late (early now, George notes, watching morning sunshine begin to lighten his curtains) hours up. Instead it's from—

A message. It's from Dream. *Thanks :)*

George groans and pulls his blanket over his head. Stupid. This is all so stupid.

A few days later and George sees that Dream has uploaded the video. They've talked since then, but their conversation is stilted, George attempting to sound normal, attempting to sound cheery and bright, but Dream hesitant, even as he too seems to try and keep up the charade.

"I'm sorry," Dream had finally said during one of their calls. "I just... is it me? Did I do something? You've just been... off."

"No," George had replied. "I just haven't been sleeping well." His eyes had latched onto his curtains. Yet again it was morning, and sunlight was beginning to stream into his room. "I think I need new curtains."

Dream had been silent after that. And then. "Alright." And then. "But if it was me, if I *had* done something... you would tell me, right?"

No.

"Yeah," George answered. He chewed his lip before nodding. "Yeah. I'd tell you."

He wouldn't. Not this.

George watches the video and it's funny, it's good, it has none of the tension he thought it had, it probably *did* have. Dream just edited it out.

When he reads the comments, either they're pure positivity, echoing some joke he or Dream laughed about in the video, or are suggestions for challenges. Nothing about behind-the-scenes conflict, nothing about awkward moments. George lets out a breath. Good. That's good. Things are still good.

The call comes unexpected.

"Sapnap?" George asks, wincing at his voice, rough after falling asleep at his desktop.

"Oh, did I wake you?" Sapnap's voice comes crackling through the line as George fixes his volume and sits up. "Sorry."

"It's...," George rubs at his eyes as he spies the time. It's 5am. "It's fine. Just a nap."

"Uh-huh." He sounds disbelieving. Who wouldn't?

"Seriously," George says, "what is it?"

"I just wanted to talk, that's all," Sapnap replies, sounding way too innocent.

"What is it?" George repeats.

"I just want to talk! C'mon, man," Sapnap whines into the receiver. "You've been, like, really distant recently, so I just wanted to check in... I guess."

George blinks. "You wanted to... check in?"

"Yeah." He hears Sapnap take a breath. "This is me checking in."

"Right." A ding in the background. "What was that?"

"Nothing!" Sapnap answers too quick to be normal. "It's nothing."

"Of course," George agrees, "because nothing sounds like a phone going off."

"I just—I want to know what's going on with my friend!" Sapnap sounds genuinely concerned now. George swallows. "You're not acting yourself. It's making me worried. It's making Dream worried."

"Dream has still been worried?" George asks.

Sapnap makes a noise. "So this *is* about Dream!"

George grips the edge of his desk. "No!"

"Oh, it *so* has to do with Dream." The smile is clear in his voice, and George feels frustration begin to inflate in his gut, uncertain if he's liking the more playful conversation or if he wants Sapnap to drop it or if—"He's still been worried?"

George blinks. "Have you noticed?"

"Uh, I," he hears movement and then, "yeah. Of course I have, I'm his friend. You noticed?"

"Of course I have," George mimics, voice pitching in a crude imitation of Sapnap, "I'm in love with him." He freezes, lips still parted, eyes wide. "I mean—you didn't hear that."

"You're—"

The call ends.

George's eyes are saucers, and he sees their reflection in his dimly lit monitor. He wakes up his computer. Sapnap is gone. George can feel his heart pound in his throat, and he's certain something is about to change, all for the worst, and it'll be his fault, and everything is over, nice, great going, George, you're doing great, and—

"Damn."

"Sapnap?" George flinches at his voice crack. That's embarrassing. But also nothing has been more embarrassing than just admitting he's in love with his best friend to his other best friend... as a joke. George buries his face in his hands and groans.

"So you meant it?"

George nods before remembering Sapnap can't see him. "Yes."

"You're... in love with him."

"Yes." George drums his fingers along his desk before leaning his head on his palm. "I didn't mean to, and—and you can't tell anyone, okay? You can't tell him."

"I—are you—?"

George sucks in a breath. "Yeah. I am. Please, Sapnap. *Please* don't tell him."

Silence. George closes his eyes.

"I won't tell him."

George lifts his head from his hand. "Thank you, Sapnap."

"Yeah, of course," George smiles as Sapnap continues, "we're friends. That's what friends are for."

George is about to reply when Sapnap adds:

"I just... Dream, though?"

Clay leans back in his chair, waiting for a text back from Sapnap.

The initial plan was for Sapnap to call George and have him figure out what's going on, why George seems to only be growing more distant, even as they both try to act like he's not, but so far, it's been an hour since that plan has been put into motion, and Clay hasn't gotten any word back from his friend.

He's about to wonder if Sapnap didn't actually call George (though it says he's online) when he gets a notification. It's him.

Clay reads the text. Reads it twice. A third time, just to be sure.

He's just not feeling well man

Clay gets up. So whatever it is, whatever the problem is, it's just him who's not allowed to know. He presses the heels of his palms to his eyes and lets out a breath.

Great.

Chapter 4

George tries to keep things normal. There's nothing wrong; Sapnap doesn't know, Dream doesn't care, and George isn't in love.

Except George actually is in love, Sapnap most definitely knows, and Dream really cares a lot.

He's mid-stream, trying his best to read donations and speedrun (a terrible combination for him, he knows, but he still *tries*), but Dream's just joined over TeamSpeak, making George stumble over his words and his player stumble over the edge of a ravine.

George blinks, stares at the "You died!" screen for another second, leans back in his chair. It had been a... decent run. George groans as Dream's laughter bubbles through his headphones. It puts his stomach in tighter knots than it already is, takes his throat in a chokehold tighter than the one it's already in. George takes a breath. He starts a new run.

"What happened?" Dream asks, giggles still intertwining with his words.

"Nothing," George replies and hopes it doesn't sound like a snap, "I just got distracted."

Dream falls into another set of giggles. George ignores him.

Despite his hopes, many of George's responses to Dream sound similar, and irritation boils under his skin, not at Dream, but at himself. He shouldn't be so affected by this. He shouldn't let himself get so affected by this.

And he *shouldn't* take it out on Dream.

George ends the stream, him and Dream giving their goodbyes, and when Dream keeps the conversation going after the camera's off, George tries his best to reply, talk normally. Not for the charade, but for Dream's sake. Dream is just trying to be a good friend. George is just being a dick.

Come next stream, however, they're about halfway through a run that probably should've ended a minute ago when Dream gives a laugh. "Oh, George," he says.

"What?" George spots a desert village and takes off towards it.

"The other day—the other day I saw a tweet. And it," his words get broken up by laughter, and George allows himself a smile, "it said something, like, about how you sounded? Like, 'oh, I hope Dream is okay, George sounded really angry,' like... *what?* When were you angry at me?"

"But I'm *always* angry at you," George says, deciding to run with the joke. Dream didn't know anything was wrong. This is him poking fun. It's okay. It's fine. "I can't believe you haven't noticed."

"Shut up!" Laughter colors Dream's words and sets George's heart alight, warm and painful all at once. "You're such an idiot."

When the stream ends, George gets a message from Sapnap.

You did this to urself

George rolls his eyes. *yeah*, he types, *because i asked to be in love with dream, sure*

You should just tell him tbh

no

Yes<3

stop

George answers the call.

"I just don't get why you can't," Sapnap immediately says. "Like, the worst that happens is he doesn't love you back."

"Like me," George corrects. "I don't... he might like me."

"You're a grown-up," Sapnap says. "Use the big L-word."

George groans. "I just can't, Sapnap. I don't know what you want from me."

"I want you to be happy," Sapnap replies, earnest. "And think about how good it'll be to have this off your chest."

"And if I get told no?" George asks. "What then? We have to film things together, Sapnap. We literally work together."

"Okay, okay, *fine*," George frowns as Sapnap sighs. "Say he ends up hating you—which he'd *never*, by the way, but say he *does*—you don't actually have to work together."

"Yes, we—"

"No, you *don't*," George hears the creaking of a chair, and then— "Like, you can code your own videos. And... I'd still do videos with you."

"Yeah, but then it's like... everything is wrong," George rests his head in his hands. "It's... everyone would know something happened."

"You don't have to tell them," Sapnap says. "Dream wouldn't tell them why. And this scenario won't even happen."

"Wouldn't," George replies. "Because I'm never telling him."

"'Never' seems a little extreme, doesn't it?"

George glares at his monitor.

"You really should tell him," Sapnap urges. "I promise you—I *promise* you, George, he won't get mad."

"It's not about him getting mad," George says. "It's about losing one of my closest friends."

Sapnap doesn't reply.

George sighs, continuing. "Too much is at risk. I can't tell him, so I won't tell him."

A pause. George waits.

"But you should," Sapnap finally says.

George decides to appease him. It's not like they're getting anywhere with this conversation anyway. "Maybe."

"A 'maybe' isn't a 'yes.'"

George takes a leaf right out from Dream's book and slams his hands down on his desk. "For fuck's sake, Sapnap!" His nails scratch against the surface of his desk as his fingers try and grip down. "I'm not confessing to him! Ever! He doesn't need to know, and you constantly being on my ass about it won't change my mind on that! If anything, I just feel less motivated to tell him! I'm not risking our careers, our entire fucking friendship, just for my stupid feelings!"

Sapnap doesn't reply. George hangs up. Sapnap doesn't call back.

Not long after, George climbs into bed, his words to the other on loop, played back full blast, and when he closes his eyes, they're painted there on the backs of his eyelids. He wonders if perhaps Sapnap will confront him tomorrow. If maybe he should be the one to approach Sapnap first.

He should be. He's the one who yelled.

But all Sapnap has done has been push him to confess. He doesn't get it. He's hardly analyzed the possible outcomes. He hasn't lost hours of sleep wondering just how many ways a confession could go wrong. He hasn't been the source of countless conspiracy threads on Twitter that are a constant itch in the back of his mind whenever he streams because he can't just act normal. He doesn't carry a ticking time bomb in his chest, ready to explode any time he hears as much as a smile in someone's words.

So George won't apologize. If he loses a friend this way... Sapnap is a friend he's willing to lose.

Sapnap is not a friend he's willing to lose. Sapnap is the only one who knows George is in love with Dream. Sapnap is the only one willing to put up with George when he wants to complain. Sapnap gets it well enough; George is just an asshole.

George finally shoots him an apology message.

i'm sorry, i know you just want to help. i shouldn't have yelled. u're my best friend, you don't deserve that

It's not enough.

Chapter 5

Waking up to George's apology text is nice, Sapnap thinks as he sends back a short acceptance.

The other's words had definitely hurt, don't get him wrong—no one wants to be yelled at by their friend—but he understands how George could be tired. But Sapnap just wants his friend to be happy, and he knows George telling Dream could result in both of them being happy, so he's pushed the other to confess more than he would if he wasn't sure.

(But George's words still hurt, and Sapnap rubs his chest at the phantom pain they've caused.)

He supposes he doesn't have to make George be the one to confess, though. He pulls up his messages with Dream. "Hey," he types.

What's up

Sapnap takes a breath. George will just thank him later for this.

George wasn't actually feeling sick, he says, but u need to be the one to talk to him

He won't talk to me though

Sapnap sighs. *He will, u just need to push more*

Dream doesn't reply. Sapnap takes another breath.

Talk to him, don't stop pushing until he tells u. Its for the best I promise

He closes out of Discord and gets up to go get breakfast. All he can do now is hope for the best. (Though he doesn't expect anything less.)

George hears the sound of a Discord notification and groans, rolling over in bed.

Sapnap freezes from where he had been buttering his toast. "Oh fuck," he says aloud to himself. In his determination, he hadn't thought to tell Dream to wait a bit, give George time to come down after their conversation—after their fight. Sapnap lifts his brows before he goes back to spreading butter on his toast. "Oops."

Another notification. And then another. And another.

George wonders if whoever's so eager to blow up his phone would absolutely lose it if he were to turn the thing off. One more slew of notifications. A hand sneaks out from under the covers to grab the device, glancing at the screen, groaning and locking it once more, before his eyes fly open and he's turning his phone back on.

What is it

Did I do something wrong

George just be honest with me pls

If I did something wrong just tell me

I know it won't seem sincere but whatever I did

I'm sorry

George unlocks his phone, opening up the app to reply. *you didn't do anything wrong*, he types. *i mean it*

Then what happened

George is *not* confessing over text. (Preferably, he doesn't confess at all, but he's starting to learn you don't always get what you want.)

The screen lights up with an incoming call. George answers.

"Please," Dream's voice comes through the line immediately, "what happened, just... tell me, George. I want to help you solve the problem, not be a part of it." When George doesn't reply, he continues. "If it's not bad, then why are you... why are *we* like this? What's going on?"

"I...", he can't find the words, "don't know if... I'm sorry."

"Just tell me, George, please," and the other is begging now, George knows, his voice tired and soft, worn down. All because of George. He hates it. He hates the other like that. Hates that he made him like that.

"Do you—it's just that—," it's three words, three words he can say for a bit, for a gag, for a joke and for fun, but not like this, not with truth dripping from every letter, not with his career, with his *heart* on the line.

"It's just that...?"

"I can't," George says. "I can't tell you."

"You said you could," Dream immediately replies. "You said you could tell me anything. You wouldn't—you don't hide stuff from me, George. What could it—why?"

"I'm sorry," George tries. "I just can't. Okay? I can't tell you."

"Why not?"

He's not letting up. George doesn't think he's going to. But he's tight-lipped. He can't say. He won't say.

"George," Dream says, "why not?"

"I...", he won't say.

"Just... tell me."

A flash of something, burning, itching, searing, under his skin. George tries to swallow it down as Dream grows only more insistent. But he just... he can't say it. His tongue is a paperweight, his confession the paper. He won't let it out. He refuses to let it out.

A sigh. Fabric rustling—Dream shifting in his seat. "Would it be easier to type it?" George frowns. "Send me a text with whatever it is you need to say."

“I don’t need to say anything,” George snaps. “And no. It’s not something I can text.”

“Then what is it?” George leans away from his phone, heart pounding at Dream’s shout. He’s mad. He’s actually mad.

Well. George can be mad too.

“It’s nothing!” George insists. “You don’t need to worry about it!”

“Clearly I do!” A rough sound comes through the receiver. A fucking growl? Dream is more than mad. He’s *pissed*. “You won’t fucking talk to me, George! That’s concerning!”

“I’d get over it eventually!” George cries. “I just needed more time! I need more time, Dream! Just leave it, okay?”

“Leave *what*, George?” Dream’s breathing is audible through the phone. “Get over *what*?”

“My fucking feelings for you!” It comes out unbidden, and George can’t stop it. He’s not even given the chance to stop it. He’s already got all his wood, the cloth. Might as well build his coffin and get in. “I’m in fucking love with you, dumbass.” He lets the lid fall closed over him. He hangs up.

“What?” Clay asks, but there’s no one left to hear. George has hung up, left him alone with that admission. That confession.

George is in love with him. George is *in love*. With *him*.

Okay.

Actually. That’s—he’s—a laugh bubbles up from his chest, forcing its way past his lips—that’s not okay at all. George confessed then hung up on him. (What the fuck?) George confessed. And then hung up on him!

Clay tries calling him back.

No one picks up.

Chapter 6

After that failed attempt, Clay tries to call again. Then again. Again and again and again.

Tries again so many times that eventually, the phone only rings once then goes straight to voicemail. Clay hangs up before the tone.

“He blocked me,” he says to the empty room. “George blocked me!”

“I blocked Dream,” George says, Sapnap quiet on the other end. “I told him I’m in love with him, and then I hung up on him, and then he called me, and I blocked him.”

“Shit,” Sapnap says.

“Shit,” George agrees. He chews on his lower lip, deliberating, before making up his mind. “None of that went how I wanted, but... I’m sorry for yelling at you. It’s nice to have it off my chest. Just... kind of sucks still. But I still shouldn’t have yelled at you.”

“It’s not supposed to be easy. Or simple. Or anything like that,” Sapnap tells him. “And yeah, you shouldn’t’ve, but I accepted your apology awhile ago. Saying sorry over text is just as okay with me as saying it over the phone.”

George nods, though the other can’t see him. He takes a breath. “Thank you,” he says, hoping his honesty can be heard in his voice. “For putting up with this. With me.”

“We’re friends,” Sapnap says, easy as always. “I’m your friend. This is just what friends do for each other.”

“I don’t know if I could help you with this,” George argues, no heat behind his words. “I’m pretty trash at romance.”

“That’s true,” Sapnap laughs. “Who the fuck confesses to their crush then blocks them?” He gives another laugh and then. “George. Who the *fuck* confesses to their crush *then blocks them*?”

“I’m sorry!” George immediately says. “I panicked! He wouldn’t stop calling me!” He sighs. “He probably hates me now.”

“No!” Sapnap lets out a breath. “George. He was calling you back because he still wanted to talk to you. I promise you if you freaked him out he would’ve just dipped. But he didn’t—because he still wants to talk to you.”

“I blocked him.” George closes his eyes, pressing two fingers between his brows. “Maybe he wanted to talk to me before, but he definitely hates me now.”

“He doesn’t,” Sapnap says, confident. “Please, George. I swear he doesn’t.” A pause. “If... if he does, just... call me back. You can tell me that you told me so, and I won’t even argue. Because you’ll be right. See? If he hates you, I’ll even admit to you being right about something!”

“You aren’t funny, Sapnap,” George replies, but a laugh is falling from his lips even as he says it—a sad, deflated little thing, but a laugh nonetheless.

“Unblock him, George,” Sapnap says after a second of silence. “It’ll be fine.”

"I really hope it'll be," George whispers, more for himself than Sapnap, before he straightens up in his chair. "Okay. I'm going to do that. I'm sorry." He leans forward, elbows coming to rest on his knees. "Okay. I'm unblocking him now. Bye, Sapnap."

"Bye, George." George pulls the phone away from his ear to hang up. Distantly, he hears a final *good luck* before he ends the call.

He goes to his settings and unblocks Dream, then before he can waste a good few minutes wondering if he's doing the right thing, his phone lights up with a call from none other than Dream. Who either never quit trying to call or decided to randomly try and call him, like he just... sensed that George unblocked him or something.

George answers.

"Hi," he says.

"George," Dream replies.

"Dream," George says.

"You love me!"

Fuck.

"Uh," George looks down at the floor. "Yeah."

"You *love* me!"

George presses his lips together, heart picking up its pace in his chest. "Mhmm."

"You're in love with me. What the hell? Sorry, I just—"

"It's stupid," George agrees, "I know."

"What?" Dream's voice has gone high. Confusion.

George continues: "You haven't even shown me your face! Not really. How can I be in love with someone I've never even seen? How can I be in love with you? It's—I just..." He makes a frustrated noise low in his throat, fingers coming up to tug at the ends of his hair. He'll need to get a haircut soon. Ugh. Dream has gone silent on the other end. George gives another tug to his hair then sighs. "It's stupid."

"It's not stupid."

"Dream, come on, you know it's dumb. I've never seen your face—you've never even *shown* me your face. We've never even met! Tell me how this isn't stupid. Every bit of this is just... it's ridiculous!"

"It's not." Dream is certain. George can hear it in his voice. "George, *George*, come on. It's not stupid. I promise you it's not." A sound, a drawer opening. "Here, how about... I can FaceTime you now. It's not stupid."

It is. It is stupid and Dream can sound as certain as he wants, but he knows it's stupid. George knows it and so does he. George is just as certain as he is. Just in the opposite direction. George sighs.

Dream tries again. "Okay, okay. Never mind, but... George, there has to be *something* ."

"Something?" George echoes. He scoffs and shakes his head. "Just forget it, Dream. Like I said, I'll get over it. Give me time, and I know I'll get over it."

A beat. George closes his eyes.

"Okay," Dream says. "We're still friends, though, right?"

"Yes," George says without pause, without hesitation. "God, of course, we are. Yeah. We're still friends."

Dream lets out a breath. George swears he can feel it on the side of his neck, soft, a caress. He represses a shiver, even as a *zing!* goes down his spine. "Okay," Dream repeats. "I'm glad. I like being your friend, George."

"Me too," George says. "I like being your friend too, Dream."

They hang up, and George hopes that's the end of it. He ignores the tension in his body that warns that it isn't.

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The call ends and before Clay can even think about what he's doing, his fingers are flying across his keyboard, eyes tracking over maps and prices and routes and weather and *is his favorite hoodie clean? Where'd he put his tennis shoes the other day?*

The flight's booked after only five minutes, zero deliberation, zero thought—Clay's never been one for hesitation, and he's not going to start treading with caution now.

He's aching all over when the plane lands, his knees hurting, neck tired, but the gratitude he feels when he steps off isn't inspired by his freedom. He stretches, then pulls out his phone, opening up Discord and immediately going to his and George's conversation. *George*, he texts, and then—

"Hello?" George's voice comes tired through the phone.

Clay grins, only slightly manic, as he says: "I'm in England."

George's reply comes a lot more awake: "No."

"I'm kind of stranded at the airport now, actually. I don't—I might've been a bit impulsive."

"You're not," George says. "You're not in England. Shut up. You're—no."

"No?" The smile has dropped from Clay's face, but his heart is pounding and he's filled with an emotion that isn't negative (it's not positive either, maybe adrenaline, *shit*).

"No. I'm not doing this with—*no*, Dream."

Clay glances to the side to see a bench only a couple paces away, and he makes his way over to it where he collapses onto the metal seat. "George," he tries, "you're telling me you don't want to meet me?"

"I *do* want to meet you, Dream," George says, earnest, and Clay bites back a fond smile at the words, "but not like this. What about Sapnap?"

"What about him?" Clay asks. "This is—George, c'mon, do something spontaneous for once in your life!"

"How do you know I've never done anything spontaneous?" George says. "I've committed fraud. I'm a scammer."

"Eating someone else's meal because it was accidentally delivered to you is not the criminal record you think it is," Clay tells him.

George scoffs. "Whatever, idiot." A beat. "Are you even in England? You could be lying to me. You're a serial liar, you know."

"So are you," Clay replies, and then the overhead speakers come on, and Clay just lets the words go through the phone, to George's ears, a verification of where he is.

“You *fucking* ass!” George sounds truly furious, even as Clay hears movement, the shuffling of clothes, jeans being pulled onto skinny legs, the small noise of George smacking himself in the face with the back of his arm as he pulls, what Clay is sure to be, a sweater on over his head. “You’re so annoying. I hate you.”

“You’re coming to get me, though, right?”

“Yes, you fucking—ugh! Idiot.”

Clay’s smile returns full force. “But I’m *your* idiot.” But by then, George has hung up, and Clay just declared to Heathrow Airport that he’s George’s idiot. Oh my God. He *is* an idiot.

Not just for that—well, yes for that, but also because he just took a plane to meet up and stay with someone who’s *in love with him* for who knows how fucking long and... does Clay love him too? Clay loves George, yeah, but like that? He doesn’t know.

George scans the faces that pass as he walks into the airport, uncertain if he’d even know which face belongs to Dream when he sees it. He’s about to call, ask for a selfie, for Dream to tell him where to go, for *something*, when he sees someone sitting on a bench a few steps away, staring down at the phone in his hands. It’s him. George knows it is.

Dream looks up then, and George can’t breathe. He’s not even, like, that attractive—not a model, not going to be advertising Calvin Klein, nothing—but *shit*, he’s still gorgeous, dirty blond hair falling loosely over his left eye, cropped short in the sides and back, broad, even at this angle, George can tell he’s broad, and his legs are stretched out in front of him, and (again) *shit*, George knew he was tall, but a skip in his heart starts up when he realizes he’ll actually have to tilt his head back to meet Dream’s eyes.

And then someone shoves past George and it’s like a gun’s been fired, Dream jumping up and practically running at him, but it’s okay because George is running too, and then they’re face-to-face, mere centimeters between them, and George is reaching his arms up to wrap around Dream’s neck (he’s not even a hugger, what the fuck), Dream’s arms coming around George’s waist and their eyes lock for the shortest second before George is burying his face in Dream’s collarbone, and Dream has his nose tucked in the hair behind George’s ear. His breath tickles every time he exhales.

“*George*,” Dream whispers, and George holds on even tighter.

Finally, the heat, the feeling of Dream’s palms spread wide on his back (a brand, possessive, burning), the exhibitionist nature of such blatant affection in a public place—everything—makes George take a step back, arms falling from their place, Dream’s hold on him loosening then falling away completely.

“I,” George starts, but his voice comes out all wrong, squeaking and awkward, so he takes a breath and tries again. “I don’t have a place for you. To sleep, I mean. You... there’s the couch?” And then he lifts his gaze to meet Dream’s eyes, and yeah, Dream is *not* going to fit on his couch. “Do you even have any money?”

Dream smiles at him, head-tilted slightly, eyes squinted—sweet.

George frowns. “Oh my God. Okay. You can... I don’t have a—could you maybe—,” and he doesn’t want to give up his bed, the last thing he wants to do is give up his bed, he’s not going to, “—you could take the bed? I can stay on the couch for awhile.”

Fuck.

When he glances up at Dream again, he's still wearing a smile, though this time it's more genuine, less of a Get Out of Jail Free card. "It's fine," he says. When he speaks, his voice is soft, placative. George doesn't like it. "I can stay on the couch. It's your place anyway, man."

George isn't sure how to feel. He leads the way out the airport anyway, letting the moment pass.

At his apartment, there's not much to say. Dream has his belongings, a suitcase packed for an indeterminate length, and George has no guest room. Dream sets his suitcase against the wall in the living room. George supposes it's fine. It's not like anyone is coming over any time soon, anyway.

Dream collapses sideways onto the couch, and as expected, he doesn't fit.

H'm. George wasn't expecting anyone to come over today either. He's not really one for having guests.

Of course it's Dream who ends up the exception.

Chapter End Notes

this fic is almost to 1k kudos and i can't stop thinking about it. have an update. i hope u guys liked it

Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

[*laughs in evil*](#)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Clay is... confused. He gets it. He does. His visit was abrupt. Absolutely zero planning past step one. But the cold shoulder George seems to be giving him Clay swears he doesn't deserve. He supposes it's not a cold shoulder, but—Clay frowns when his commentary on the show they're watching goes unlaughed at—it's not exactly the warmth he expected.

George has been really quiet ever since they sorted out sleeping arrangements, only giving half-hearted answers to what they could watch on TV or what they should get to eat. He knows it was impulsive, but was going to the UK really that bad of an idea?

Halfway through the second episode of the sitcom they're watching, George stretches, rising from the couch with the action. "I think I'm going to bed," he says. "We can... do something tomorrow."

"Yeah," Clay replies, because he doesn't really know what else to say, "of course."

George smiles at him, but it's empty, more out of courtesy than any true feeling. It's wrong. Clay smiles back anyway. When George disappears into his bedroom, Clay goes to rummage through his own suitcase and pull out his toothbrush and tube of toothpaste. He finds the bathroom, the location having briefly slipped from his mind since his arrival earlier that day, and sets about brushing his teeth. He's trying to figure out what's appropriate to wear to bed when there's a knock at the door, and when Clay turns, George stands there, small and awkward, a pile of blankets and a pillow in his arms. His eyes widen when he looks at Clay's face before a laugh comes out of him, and he's adjusting the pile in his arms to reach up and wipe away some toothpaste that had been dribbling down Clay's chin.

"You look like an idiot," he says. He reaches past Clay slightly to rinse off his thumb under the still running water. "I've got some blankets for you," he adds, quiet, as he wipes his hand off on the hanging towel. It's as the pad of his thumb brushes over the fabric that he seems to realize where he is—or rather who he's with—and he straightens, light in his eyes fading and soft smile fading. "I'll put them on the couch."

He frogmarches out of the doorway and into the living room. Clay watches him all the while, heartstrings tugged by the other, though he isn't sure why. He turns back to the sink, water still running.

Well. At least it's clear that, despite the freezing out going on, George is still in love with him. He doesn't know if that's good or not.

Clay looks up at his reflection in the mirror. He doesn't know much of anything these days.

True to his word, George had left the blankets on the couch, but seemed to decide he'd met his Dream quota for the day, since he's back in his room with the door shut by the time Clay comes out of the bathroom.

He expects sleep to be a fight, but by the time he's under the blankets on the couch, head resting on the pillow, the soft scent of George's detergent (of *George*) wrapped all around him, exhaustion pulls at his bones, and he's asleep within seconds.

When Clay wakes, sunlight streams in through open blinds, and George's door is still shut. He shoves the blankets off of himself, sitting up and looking around. He doesn't really want to wake up, but anticipation sets him on edge, and he finds himself going through George's cabinets like some creep, not searching for food, but also not *not* searching for food. Or at least that's what he tells him, just to feel a little less like some freak.

After a good while of going through most of the cabinets below the counter, Clay gets to the cabinets over the counter, and that's when George's door opens and he walks into the kitchen. He doesn't say anything, so neither does Clay, who just continues on his mission of thoroughly inspecting every item in George's kitchen. He can feel George's eyes on him the entire time, and he swears if he were to look at his skin, there'd be markings there, George's gaze that heavy.

"Are you looking for something?" George finally asks.

"No," Clay replies, nearing the final cabinet, "I'm just looking."

George doesn't say anything for a bit. And then, "You're so weird."

Clay can't stop himself from scoffing. "That's rich coming from you."

George makes a noise, and when Clay looks at him, his brows are furrowed and lips downturned. But also the morning sun is catching in his hair and making it glow golden and some of it dances across his face, turning his pupils to honey, warm and hazy with sleep still. His frown disappears then, settling into something gentler, kinder, a smile curling at the corners of his lips, and it's at that moment, him standing there looking soft and relaxed in his pajamas, Clay thinks he wouldn't mind seeing George like this every morning, and *oh*. That's what this is.

For as much as George is in love with Clay, he's in love with George all the same.

"What?" George asks, and Clay blinks, startled out of his thoughts. "Why are you looking at me like that? Is there something on my face?"

Clay blinks again before a laugh breaks free from his mouth, happy and light for what feels like the first time since getting here. "Nope," he replies, popping the 'p.' "Just looking."

George stares at him for a long second before sighing. "Just find something to eat for breakfast."

So Clay does, and they have some bland British cereal in matching bowls, and then they pick up where they left off in the TV show last night, and this time when Clay makes a joke, George laughs, and Clay grins and cracks another one at the earliest opportunity, and he's in love with George, and despite how monumental it seemed upon realizing, it's really not monumental at all.

The sky is blue, the grass is green, and Clay is in love with George. What's new?

Clay's grin softens into something more timid as George's own laughter dies down, going back to paying attention to the show. He's always been in love with George, and now he knows George

loves him back, and instead of doing something about it, he's telling jokes to make the other laugh while sitting a whole cushion apart on the sofa. Ignoring the fact that they're finally in the same space... *what's new* indeed.

Chapter End Notes

yeah .. so i'm sure i'm surprising no one when i say i hate this chapter ksdfhjgf especially after months of waiting it's like i come back to this fic with *this*? but i really wanted to update this because i've actually got a massive au planned that i've stayed up days planning out and am now properly writing so like that's going to be a thing. in light of that, i do hope to continue writing vermillion but don't expect updates any time soon, and i do plan to update the catboy george au sometime in the next couple of days.

until next time! <3 ciao :D

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